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Draft report

Chapter II

Recommendations and decisions

D. Space and sustainable development

1. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and sustainable development", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

2. The representatives of Brazil, Egypt, France, Germany, India, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, the United States and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of) made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

3. The Committee had before it a conference room paper entitled "Update on the recent developments in the context of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda" (A/AC.105/2015/CRP.13).

4. The Committee heard a presentation by the representative of India entitled "Use of space technology inputs for sustainable development in India: an update".

5. The Committee noted that space science and technology applications could play a significant role in enhancing environmental sustainability and socioeconomic development for all countries. The Committee also noted the value of space technology and applications and space-derived data and information in contributing to sustainable development, including by improving the formulation and subsequent implementation of policies and programmes of action in connection with land and water management, marine and coastal ecosystems, health care, climate change, disaster risk reduction and emergency response, energy, navigation, seismic monitoring, natural resources management, biodiversity, agriculture and food security.

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6. The Committee also noted the information provided by States on their actions and programmes aimed at increasing awareness and understanding in society of the applications of space science and technology for meeting development needs.

7. The Committee further noted the continued role played by the International Space Station in education and outreach to educational communities worldwide.

8. The Committee noted with satisfaction the large number of outreach activities carried out at the regional level for building capacity through education and training in using space science and technology applications for sustainable development. The Committee also noted with appreciation the role played in space-related education by the regional centres for space science and technology education, affiliated to the United Nations.

9. The Committee noted a number of space-related conferences, competitions, exhibitions, symposiums and seminars worldwide connecting educators and students and providing them with training and educational opportunities.

10. The Committee commended the Secretariat for continuously providing updates on the implementation of the outcomes of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development at the intergovernmental level and the formulation of the post-2015 development agenda, as contained in conference room papers A/AC.105/2013/CRP.7, A/AC.105/2014/CRP.15, A/AC.105/C.1/2014/CRP.21, A/AC.105/C.1/2015/CRP.26 and A/AC.105/2015/CRP.13.

11. The Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to continue taking an active part in the United Nations System Task Team on the Post-2015 United Nations Development Agenda and other inter-agency mechanisms for the processes related to the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development and the post-2015 development agenda, within its capacities, in order to promote the inclusion of space-related references and elements in the documentation generated by the United Nations Secretariat under those processes.

12. Some delegations expressed the view that it was essential to promote international cooperation and strengthen intraregional cooperation, exchange expertise and best practices and build capacity at the national and regional levels, as international and regional cooperation in the field of space activities could generate synergies and create awareness of the benefits that space science and technology provided for sustainable development.

13. The view was expressed that the Committee should facilitate the adequate representation of space-related capacities in international, regional and national sustainable development processes, and their institutional integration into those processes.

14. The view was expressed that the development of space technology should be further encouraged and affirmed as a crucial element in the post-2015 development agenda.

15. The view was expressed that the international community should enhance mutual partnerships and continue to provide technical assistance to Member States, in particular developing countries, including by providing adequate resources for, transferring knowledge about and building capacity in space technology.

F. Space and water

16. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and water", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

17. The representatives of Brazil, Egypt, France, India, Japan, Pakistan and the United States made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by other member States.

18. The Committee heard presentations on the following topics:

(a) Space-based technology for water: activities and achievements of the Italian Space Agency, by the representative of Italy;

(b) The ResEAU Project: producing an atlas of the hydrogeology of the Republic of Chad from optical and radar satellite imagery, by the representative of Switzerland.

19. In the course of the discussion, delegations reviewed national and cooperative water-related activities, giving examples of national programmes and bilateral, regional and international cooperation.

20. The Committee noted that water and the issues related to it were becoming one of the most critical environmental problems facing humankind, often with political implications, and that the conservation and proper utilization of existing water resources were of paramount importance for sustaining life on Earth. In that connection, space-derived data could support policymakers in making informed decisions on water resources management.

21. The Committee noted that a large number of space-borne platforms addressed water-related issues and that space-derived data were used extensively in water management. The Committee also noted that space technology and applications, combined with non-space technologies, played an important role in addressing many water-related issues, including the observation and study of global water cycles and unusual climate patterns, the mapping of water courses, the monitoring of glaciers, the estimation of snowmelt run-offs, the planning and management of reservoirs and irrigation projects, the monitoring and mitigation of the effects of floods, droughts and cyclones and improving the timeliness and accuracy of forecasts.

22. The Committee noted that the Asian Water Cycle Initiative, an endeavour by the Group on Earth Observations (GEO), continued developing an information system of systems to promote the implementation of integrated water resources management through the integration and sharing of data as a basis for decision-making with regard to national water policies in 20 Asian countries.

G. Space and climate change

23. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Space and climate change", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

24. The representatives of Algeria, Egypt, France, Indonesia, Japan, Pakistan, South Africa and the United States made statements under the item. A statement was also made by the observer for El Salvador. During the general exchange of views,

statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States and permanent observers.

25. The Committee heard a presentation entitled "Use of Earth observation inputs for climate change studies in India", by the representative of India.

26. The Committee welcomed the panel discussion organized by France and entitled "Space and climate change: tools for characterizing climate change, helping societies and fostering adaptation", held on the margins of its current session. The panel discussion underlined the key role of space tools in the negotiations leading up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, to be held in Paris from 30 November to 11 December 2015.

27. The Committee further welcomed the intention expressed during the panel discussions by the representatives of space agencies to adopt a joint declaration on climate change and disaster management at the Heads of Space Agencies Summit on Climate Change and Disaster Management, organized by the International Academy of Astronautics, to be hosted by the Mexican Space Agency in Mexico City on 17 and 18 September 2015. Such a joint declaration would be submitted as an official contribution to the Conference of the Parties and would present an additional opportunity for the Committee to reiterate its long-standing position that space science and space applications are of vital importance for improving fundamental knowledge of the universe and for improving the daily lives of people worldwide, as stated in "The Space Millennium: Vienna Declaration on Space and Human Development", adopted in 1999 by the Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space.

28. The Committee noted the continued alarming trend in global warming, as indicated in the report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) entitled "Climate change 2014: impacts, adaptation, and vulnerability", and the adverse impacts of climate change on all nations, in particular developing nations, which were affected disproportionately.

29. The Committee noted the crucial and ever-increasing role of satellite-based global weather and climate observation data for observing climate change, mitigating its causes and adapting to its consequences. The Committee underscored the importance of bilateral and multilateral partnerships in activities related to climate change and in the area of Earth observation, such as the efforts undertaken by the World Meteorological Organization (WMO), GEO and the Committee on Earth Observation Satellites at its 28th plenary meeting, held from 28 to 30 October 2014 in Tromsø, Norway, and stressed its commitment to monitoring the climate from space through coordinated planning, production, improvement and availability of space-based data records on a global scale.

30. The Committee also noted the importance of global initiatives aimed at providing support to combating climate change through the use of space tools, such as the Global Climate Observing System, which provides support to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the Coordination Group for Meteorological Satellites, the World Climate Research Programme and IPCC. The Committee further noted that in pursuing efforts to achieve a global response to climate change, cooperation between the Committee and UNFCCC should be strengthened.

31. The Committee noted that space-derived data, together with ground-based observations, provided an integrated perspective on the changing environment of the Earth and were crucial for gaining an understanding of the implications of global climate change for humankind. The Committee also noted that more should be done to promote the use of space applications in efforts to adapt to climate change and minimize its adverse impacts. The Committee further noted that successful national climate change adaptation policies should be integrated into the post-2015 development agenda.

32. The Committee recognized the importance of regional initiatives such as the initiative of the Asia-Pacific Regional Space Agency Forum entitled "Space applications for the environment", which encouraged the use of space applications in environmental monitoring for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

33. The Committee noted that a number of conferences were scheduled to take place in the lead-up to the twenty-first session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, such as the international conference organized by the Algerian Space Agency entitled "Climate change, a reality to be considered in development trajectories: modelling, space tools and adaptation", to be held from 4 to 6 October 2015 in Algiers. The conference would focus on the impact of climate change in the Mediterranean region and aim to strengthen regional cooperation on the issue.

34. The Committee noted a number of ongoing national efforts to build, launch and operate Earth-observation satellites to track the manifestations and effects of climate change and the continued readiness on the part of spacefaring nations to share Earth observation data freely and openly.

H. Use of space technology in the United Nations system

35. The Committee considered the agenda item entitled "Use of space technology in the United Nations system", in accordance with General Assembly resolution 69/85.

36. The representatives of India, Indonesia, Japan and the Republic of Korea made statements under the item. During the general exchange of views, statements relating to the item were also made by representatives of other member States.

37. The Committee heard presentations on the following topics:

(a) China's manned space programme, by the representative of China;

(b) Progress report of the Regional Centre for Space Science and Technology Education in Asia and the Pacific (China), by the representative of China;

(c) Utilizing space and GIS applications for effective disaster risk management: practices of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) in Asia and the Pacific, by the observer for ESCAP.

38. The Director of the Office for Outer Space Affairs made a statement informing the Committee about the outcome of the thirty-fifth session of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities (UN-Space), held in Bonn, Germany, on 27 and 28 May 2015.

39. The Committee welcomed the agreement of UN-Space that the focus of the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system for the period 2016-2017 would be on assisting the Committee in its preparations for the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space ("UNISPACE+50"), which would be the theme of the sessions of the Committee and its subsidiary bodies in 2018, and to provide an overview of efforts by United Nations entities aimed at contributing to the main pillars of "UNISPACE+50" and at promoting international cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space.

40. The Committee welcomed with appreciation the UN-Space special report on space for global health (A/AC.105/1091).

41. The Committee noted with satisfaction that the twelfth open informal session of UN-Space had been organized as an integral part of the joint United Nations/Germany International Conference on Earth Observation: Global Solutions for the Challenges of Sustainable Development in Societies at Risk, held in Bonn, Germany, from 26 to 28 May 2015. The session, held as a joint UN-Space-Bonn Conference high-level panel on space-based information for development, provided an opportunity for the participants of the Conference to engage in a dialogue with the United Nations system to review challenges and opportunities in mainstreaming Earth observations into key areas under the post-2015 development framework, and to examine common perspectives for increasing the use of space-derived information for the attainment of global development goals.

42. The Committee noted the cooperative efforts between member States and United Nations entities to promote the use of space technology to resolve global issues faced by humanity, including in building the resilience of nations to multiple shocks. In that connection, the Committee took note of the adoption in Japan in March 2015 of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, and the activities under the Asia-Pacific Plan of Action for Applications of Space Technology and Geographic Information Systems for Disaster Risk Reduction and Sustainable Development, 2012-2017.

43. The Committee requested the Office for Outer Space Affairs to further promote, through United Nations entities, the increased practical application of space science and technology for development, in view of the catalytic role that such application could play for development in the post-2015 context.